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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2004

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER  
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS

Bush: 'We can make the world a better place' - Sabah  
Bush: 'We will free the Middle East' - Milliyet  
Weston's surprise visit to Ankara - Sabah  
Weston holds Cyprus preparation meeting in Ankara - Turkiye  
Turkey a key country for German foreign policy - Milliyet  
Bribery scandal may force Sharon to resign - Milliyet  
Tehran in confusion, Khatemi deputies resign - Turkiye

OPINION MAKERS

Bush launches election campaign by threatening Middle East -  
Zaman  
Bush rolls up sleeves for elections - Radikal  
Bush challenges the world - Yeni Safak  
Musharraf calls for reform in Islam - Cumhuriyet  
Musharraf: West regards Islam as a religion of terror -  
Cumhuriyet  
Annan may kick off Cyprus talks - Zaman  
Reformists resign in Tehran - Radikal

BRIEFING

Cyprus: Foreign Minister Gul said that Prime Minister  
Erdogan would ask UN Secretary General Annan in Davos this  
Saturday to resume the Cyprus talks. Erdogan and Annan will  
not hold a second Cyprus meeting in the US, Gul said. TRNC  
Prime Minister Talat said before leaving Ankara for Lefkosa  
on Wednesday that his government's priority would be to  
contribute to efforts for resuming Cyprus negotiations.  
Talat stressed that both Turkey and the TRNC want a solution  
within the framework of the Annan Plan. He confirmed that  
Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktas will continue to  
represent the TRNC at the talks. Ankara wants to maintain  
the bi-zonal structure of the island and preserve Turkey's  
status as a guarantor power, Talat noted.

Weston Visits Ankara: US Special Cyprus Coordinator  
Ambassador Thomas Weston came to Ankara Wednesday to urge  
the Turkish side to adopt a constructive position on Cyprus  
before Prime Minister Erdogan's US visit next week. Weston  
reportedly confirmed to the Turks that President Bush  
supports UN Secretary General Annan's proposal that the  
results of the negotiations be submitted to a referendum.  
The MFA outlined for Weston the basic points of Ankara's  
Cyprus plan. The surprise visit by Weston is a sign that  
Cyprus will top the agenda during Erdogan's meetings with US  
leaders.

German FM in Ankara: Visiting German Foreign Minister  
Joschka Fischer told officials in Ankara that UN Secretary  
General Annan will not accept substantial changes to his  
proposed peace plan for Cyprus. Fischer urged the two  
Cypriot sides to show determination for a settlement.  
Although the Cyprus issue is not among the criteria for  
Turkey's EU entry, Fischer said that it is a 'political  
reality' that progress on Cyprus is important to Turkey's  
accession process. Fischer characterized Ankara's efforts  
to adopt the Copenhagen Criteria as 'impressive,' but noted  
deficiencies regarding the implementation of reforms. 'I  
can see Turkey moving closer to the EU,' Fischer said,  
voicing hope for positive developments in Cyprus.

New members against Turkey in EU: Some countries slated to join the EU on May 1 oppose opening accession negotiations with Turkey, "Cumhuriyet" reports. The paper expects the new members, especially Poland, to object to Turkey's membership based on religious and economic factors.

Uzan party to receive Treasury aid: The Constitutional Court has rejected a request by the Finance Ministry to freeze TL11 trillion in Treasury funding for Cem Uzan's Genc Party (GP). The GP was slated to receive the funding boost under Turkey's law on political parties. The Constitutional Court said there was no ground for freezing the payment to the GP, but that the court would undertake necessary action in line with the law if irregularities are found in the GP accounts.

EDITORIAL OPINION: The State of the Union

"Start of the Election Campaign and Threat to the Middle East"

Ali Aslan commented in the Islamist-intellectual Zaman (1/22): "President Bush predominantly addressed the criticism about the war against terrorism as he focused on Iraq and the campaign against terror. The text of the speech highlighted the President's role as Commander in Chief. The SOTU also indicated that Bush will give higher priority to national security issues over the economy during the election campaign. . It is also interesting that Bush did not pronounce the phrase 'axis of evil' this time, yet he reaffirmed his commitment to pursue reforms in the Middle East and to fight against regimes that shelter terrorists. . In sum, the State of the Union address included warnings about the Middle East but also marked the official start of the 2004."

"Listening to George Bush"

Ayşe Özgün wrote in the mass appeal Vatan (1/22): "The SOTU highlighted the US commitment to fight terrorism. President Bush listed in detail the anti-terror measures his administration has taken, and he provided justification for the ongoing war against terrorism. Bush believes that success is near in his efforts to democratize the Middle East and to eliminate terrorism. However, he did not mention Palestine-Israel issue at all. The text of the speech reminded me of the 'anti-communism' days in the late 1970s. If you replace the word 'terrorist' with 'communist,' there would be very little change to the texts from that period."

"Bush: Might Makes Right"

Zeynep Atıkan argued in the mass appeal-sensational Aksam (1/22): "The whole nature of the SOTU address is designed with the 'might makes right' mentality. No matter how Bush dressed up this idea with his rhetoric about freedom and democracy, he could not hide his real intention. The fact of the matter is that world public opinion hates the US, and the SOTU address did nothing to help the US in this regard."

EDELMAN